



NEWS RELEASE

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ■ BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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BLM Prescribes Fire for Areas in Central New Mexico

ALBUQUERQUE – Beginning June 1, 2005 and through July 10, the Bureau of Land Management's Rio Puerco Field Office in Albuquerque will conduct four prescribed burns. The prescribed burns include the Cerro Rendija, Chain of Craters, Coal Creek, and Chijuilla in central New Mexico.

The Cerro Rendija Burn, a joint project between the BLM and the El Malpais National Monument (managed by the National Park Service) consists of 1,957 acres; the Chain of Craters burn consists of 980 acres. The dominant fuel type within both burns is ponderosa pine, piñon, and juniper. Both of these burns are located in the El Malpais National Conservation Area, about 70 miles west of Albuquerque, south of State Highway 53 on County Road 42.

The Coal Creek Prescribed Fire will be just off of Highway 550 about 10 miles south of Cuba, NM, and consists of 500 acres of sagebrush and grass. The Chijuilla Burn is also located just off of Highway 550 but is 6 miles north of Cuba, NM. The Chijuilla Burn consists of an understory of grasses, and sagebrush, and an overstory of piñon, and juniper.

The goal of these projects is to employ fire to improve wildlife habitat, increase native grass cover, and to reduce tree and brush densities, ladder fuels, and hazardous fuel loadings that under the right conditions could contribute to destructive wildfires.

Prescribed fire in progress signs will be posted along State Highway 53 and State Highway 550 during the days of the burn and the days that smoke may be visible from the highways. Please drive carefully when on these roads. Visibility along State Highways 53 and 550 might be lower due to smoke conditions.

Please contact the Rio Puerco Field Office (505)761-8700 for further information.

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